



The European Collaborative Research Projects in the Social Sciences.

The ECRP Programme is designed to advance international research collaboration in the social sciences by encouraging European academic networking and pooling of research expertise. The Programme offers an opportunity to carry out problem-driven multilateral projects on any topic within the Social Sciences that demonstrates an international framework for research collaboration. Projects need not be exclusively European in their topic focus.

- ECRP is part of the EUROCORES Scheme that provides a flexible framework to support top class European research in and across all scientific areas.
- Research funding is provided by participating national research funding and research performing agencies.
- The European Science Foundation provides the Programme coordination and supports scientific networking of funded scientists in different EUROCORES ECRP Programmes.
- EUROCORES ECRP funds research in the social sciences that is only of the highest quality, is innovative and collaborative.

The Projects

In the 2005 competition, the following eight CRPs have been funded.

Eye-Movement Control in Reading: basic and applied issues of fixation and saccade generation

(Funding organisations: DFG, FWF, ESRC)

Reading is a central cultural skill, enabling the pursuit of goals ranging from education to social participation. At the behavioural level, reading comprises alternations of eye fixations and quick eye movements modulated by visual, language-related and oculomotor dynamics that can be simulated by computer programs. This project will research new, complex reading dynamics with a three-pronged programme:

1. Collecting new reading data to isolate language-dependent and language-independent effects.
2. Testing computer models of reading in different languages and against each other for the first time.
3. Linking the expertise of Individual Projects (IPs) through associated experiments (addressing, for example, differences between oral and silent reading, or spatial coding of text material during reading).

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The Integration of the European Second generation (TIES). A research project in fifteen cities in eight countries.

(Funding organisations: NWO, MEC, FAS, SNF)

Immigration and the subsequent integration of newcomers is one of the foremost challenges for Europe's increasingly heterogeneous cities. The integration of the second generation — the children born of immigrant parentage in the country of immigration — is crucial to this process. The oldest group of the second generation is now entering the labour market and the TIES project will describe its position in several domains (education, labour market, housing, identity, social relations, family formation, transnationalism, religion) through a standardised international survey.

In the TIES project we will compare the Turkish, Moroccan and ex-Yugoslavian second generation across fifteen cities in eight countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

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Trafficking for Forced Labour in Industries other than the Sex Industry across Europe

(Funding organisations: ESRC, FWO, GACR, IRCHSS, PAN, FAS)

This proposal follows on from a research project currently underway in the UK, Czech Republic, Portugal and Ireland undertaken by Anti-Slavery International (London), the CSGE (University of Birmingham) and local partner NGOs, with the aim of focusing specifically on persons trafficked for forced labour, services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, and on their access to justice in EU countries.

The project aims to address the fact that so far the identification, assistance and protection strategies for victims of trafficking are designed almost exclusively to address the needs of persons trafficked into the sex industry. Project outcomes will lead to policy recommendations and should improve the understanding of the issue of trafficking for labour exploitation and ensure that it is mainstreamed in the EU.

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Fabricating Quality in European Education

(Funding organisations: ESRC, FIST, AKA)

Quality assurance and evaluation (QAE) is increasingly important nationally and transnationally in education. It may steer policy and practice at all levels and in all sectors of education in national systems, and may be understood as a form of governance of education. This project draws on detailed individual multilevel studies that share a common design. These studies enable the collaborative project to identify and analyse, through a variety of theoretical approaches, the ways in which education is controlled, managed and governed through QAE. This collaborative project will contribute to the development of comparative methodologies that are sensitive to the influence of transnational pressures for QAE in national systems, while also recognising the importance of context in shaping responses to these pressures.

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Decision Making: ‘exploiting’ bounded rationality

(Funding organisations: MEC, CNRS, DFG, SNF)

Because people lack the ‘computational power’ needed to take decisions in a fully rational manner, it is important to understand how and how well simple decision rules (that people can use) fare in different kinds of environments and for different types of tasks. An additional, and often critical, consideration is to find ways of helping people make decisions in complex tasks.

The methodology used involves simulations, theoretical statistical analyses and experiments with human participants. In all cases, it considers in detail how abstract or behavioural rules lead to functional or dysfunctional outcomes in different environments. This approach, therefore, leads to the development of ‘environmental’ theories of decision behaviour.

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Dynamics of Actors and Networks across Levels: individuals, groups, organisations and social settings

(Funding organisations: NWO, CNRS, DFG, MEC, VR, SNF)

Social networks are increasingly recognised as being important explanations for behaviour and the well-being of individuals and also for the performance of organisations. Simultaneously, social actors choose their relationships on the basis of behaviour patterns and network positions of actual and potential interaction partners. Enhanced understanding of these phenomena requires the empirical study of the mutual influence between the social actor and the social network; in addition, the multiplicity of social subgroups and the diversity of organisations and social settings provide further levels that need to be taken into consideration. This ECRP project brings together various disciplines, with the purpose of elaborating and implementing this new methodology in an optimal way and to profit from it in various studies.

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New Migration Dynamics: regular and irregular work on the European labour market

(Funding organisations: CNRS, PAN, MEC)

This collaborative project deals with working migrations and gender matters in three economic sectors — agriculture, domestic services and prostitution — in which foreigners and among them, women, are over-represented. The study analyses the contradictory demands regarding immigration in the EU, considering the gap between political will, which intends to reduce extra-EU migrations, and economic practice in sectors where low-paid jobs allow the maintenance of economic activities that would not otherwise survive in Western countries.

Researches will analyse both the social and economic implications in the areas concerned in industrialised countries and the impact that these types of jobs and mobility have on migrants' careers. In this context, the role played by women will be highlighted.

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Migration and Networks of Care in Europe: a comparative European research project

(Funding organisations: IRCHSS, DFG, NWO, ESRC)

The provision of domestic services in private households has emerged as a major issue in the EU. As female labour force participation has increased, demand for domestic workers has risen. Inadequate state provision for childcare facilities and the care of the elderly, frail and disabled is intensifying this demand, mostly met by migrant women, with non-EU nationals officially accounting for over 10% of those employed in this sector. In this project, the causes and implications of these trends — including an analysis of how transnational migration is affecting the construction of welfare provision and the law in European societies, as well as the home and family — will be examined and policy recommendations made.

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European Collaborative Research Projects (ECRP) and the ESF Standing Committee for the Social Sciences (SCSS)

The ECRP Scheme is supported by the Standing Committee for the Social Sciences (SCSS) which is chaired by Professor Sir Roderick Floud (Professor Emeritus of London Metropolitan University); the Committee is composed of its members, leading scientists nominated by the ESF Member Organisations (research councils or academies) working in social sciences, and observers from other social science institutions. Along with national experts several observers from key social science institutions are also participating in two plenary meetings per year helping to shape the SCSS' role in the European Research Area. The task of the committee is to advance Social Sciences on a European level by supporting innovative research ideas and approaches from the scientific community. Scientific agenda setting is therefore a crucial element of Standing Committee work.

The social sciences encompass a range of disciplines that aim to examine and explain human functioning on a variety of interlocking levels, ranging from neural foundations to individual behaviour, group processes and the functioning of entire societies. Consequently, the social sciences employ a wide variety of methods which address the different levels of analyses that are necessary. Whilst the methods are contrasting, they have been tailor-made to be scientifically rigorous, and to ensure that reliable knowledge is secured. Against this background, the SCSS funds and develops initiatives in the fields of psychology and the cognitive sciences, pedagogic and education research, social anthropology, sociology and gender studies, economics, business and administrative sciences, geography, demography, environmental sciences, law, political sciences, communication sciences, international relations, social statistics and informatics.

For more information go to: www.esf.org/scss

The aim of the European Collaborative Research (EUROCORES) Scheme is to enable researchers in different European countries to develop collaboration and scientific synergy in areas where European scale and scope are required to reach the critical mass necessary for top class science in a global context.

The scheme provides a flexible framework which allows national basic research funding and performing organisations to join forces to support excellent European research in and across all scientific areas.

The European Science Foundation (ESF) provides scientific coordination and support for networking activities of funded scientists currently through the EC FP6 Programme, under contract No. ERAS-CT-2003-980409. Research funding is provided by participating national organisations.

www.esf.org/eurocores

THE FOLLOWING NATIONAL FUNDING ORGANISATIONS SUPPORT THE ECRP SCHEME:

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Austrian Science Research Fund, Austria

Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen (FWO)

Research Foundation Flanders, Belgium

Research Promotion Foundation (RPF), Cyprus

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Czech Science Foundation, Czech Republic

Forsknings- og Innovationsstyrelsen (FIST)

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Suomen Akatemia/Finlands Akademi (AKA)

Academy of Finland, Finland

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)

National Centre for Scientific Research, France

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)

German Research Foundation, Germany

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Norges Forskningsråd (NF)

Research Council of Norway, Norway

Polska Akademia Nauk (PAN)

Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland

Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Poland

Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (MEC)

Ministry of Education and Science, Spain

Forskningsrådet för arbetsliv och socialvetenskap (FAS)

Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research, Sweden

Vetenskapsrådet (VR)

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The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, Turkey

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), United Kingdom

ECRP I

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The European Science Foundation (ESF) provides a platform for its Member Organisations to advance European research and explore new directions for research at the European level.

Established in 1974 as an independent non-governmental organisation, the ESF currently serves 77 Member Organisations across 30 countries.

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